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**COMMENTS OF THE CITY OF STOCKTON CONCERNING THE CALFED
DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC EIS/EIR AND REVISED PHASE II REPORT**

Attached are the City's comments on the CALFED Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR And Revised Phase II Report.

The City of Stockton is partially within the legally defined Delta and takes great interest in the activities of CALFED and the resulting implementation plans. The City has for many years worked on its own and in concert with others to improve the quality of the San Joaquin River and Delta region and is generally supportive of the approach offered in the Phase II Report.

The City believes that CALFED's program can be even more effective if more emphasis is given to improvement of water quality of the San Joaquin River upstream of Vernalis, the development of a TMDL for Dissolved Oxygen, and in formulating alternatives to address the groundwater overdraft and lack of adequate water supplies for municipal uses in the Eastern San Joaquin Basin.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into this very important process for all of the citizens of California.

Morris L. Allen

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DIRECTOR OF MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

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COMMENTS OF THE CITY OF STOCKTON
CONCERNING THE CALFED DRAFT
PROGRAMMATIC EIS/EIR AND
REVISED PHASE II REPORT

September 23, 1999

Submitted by Morris L. Allen

Director of Municipal Utilities

COMMENTS OF THE CITY OF STOCKTON CONCERNING THE CALFED DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC EIS/EIR AND REVISED PHASE II REPORT

The City of Stockton is pleased to have the opportunity to offer these comments on the CALFED Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR and its appendices, including the Revised Phase II Report. These comments summarize the City's views on the main issues of concern to it; and are a slightly expanded version of comments first offered at the public hearing in Stockton on August 18, 1999.

The City of Stockton is located on the San Joaquin and Calaveras Rivers, and approximately one-half the City lies within the legally defined Delta. The City comprises 44 percent of the total San Joaquin County population. The current greater Stockton Urban Area population is approximately 350,000. Between 1980 and 1990, the City had an average annual growth rate of 3.48 percent. A secure water supply and healthy Delta environment is absolutely essential to the survival of the City's economy, which is highly dependent upon agriculture. Stockton is vitally interested in the availability of an adequate water supply in Eastern San Joaquin County and is also concerned with water quality in the San Joaquin River and the Delta. The City believes that CALFED's actions must assure the availability of adequate water supplies for the Eastern San Joaquin County region including the City of Stockton and improve the water quality of the San Joaquin River.

The City is generally in agreement with the Statement given by San Joaquin County Supervisor Robert J. Cabral at your Public Hearing on August 18, 1999 in Stockton. In particular, the City agrees with San Joaquin County's statement that CALFED must respect the Area of Origin and Delta Protection provisions of California Law in carrying out its programs. The City's comments on specific topics follow.

SOUTH DELTA BARRIERS

The City of Stockton supports the installation of an operable Head of Old River Barrier to provide a method to directly (i.e. adaptively) manage the allocation of San Joaquin River flow

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past Stockton and flow into Old River. The Head of Old River Barrier should be operated for multiple purposes, including: (1) maintaining flows in the Main Stem San Joaquin River to improve fish migration, (2) maintaining water depths in South Delta Channels, (3) maintaining positive flow in the San Joaquin River past Stockton to assist in meeting dissolved oxygen (DO) requirements, and (4) maintaining flow in the San Joaquin River to carry salts out to the San Francisco Bay, not through South Delta channels to the export pumps. The City also supports all three of the agricultural barriers proposed by the South Delta Water Agency, including the Grant Line Canal Barrier.

Decisions regarding operation of the Head of Old River Barrier and the agricultural barriers must be made by a committee of stakeholders which includes representatives of local interests. The City of Stockton asks to be a member of the Barrier Operations Committee. Operation of the Head of Old River Barrier should be controlled on a real time basis in conjunction with water stage, water quality, water export, and fish monitoring information.

WATER QUALITY (SALINITY) AT VERNALIS AND UPSTREAM

The City of Stockton supports a bundle of actions to deal with water quality at Vernalis, and in the San Joaquin River upstream from Vernalis. In order to adequately protect the Delta environment, CALFED must devise and implement a comprehensive plan for improvement of water quality in the San Joaquin River.

The CALFED Water Quality Program must assure that the salinity objective at Vernalis, designed to protect agricultural uses, is met. In addition, water quality objectives should be established on the main stem of the San Joaquin River in the 130-mile segment that is listed on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list as impaired. We were pleased to see that the CALFED Water Quality Program Plan states that CALFED should support establishment of water quality objectives, development and implementation of Best Management Practices

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(BMPs), development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) (as necessary), and financial incentives for salinity control. (Water Quality Program Plan, p. 7-15.) CALFED should also support the monitoring and studies needed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board to establish water quality objectives. (Water Quality Program Plan, p. 7-20.) In general, CALFED should support and fund the Regional Board as necessary in its adoption of a Basin Plan Amendment for salinity and boron in the entire 130-mile water quality impaired segment of the San Joaquin River.

DISSOLVED OXYGEN

CALFED should continue to support the activities of the San Joaquin River Dissolved Oxygen Steering Committee in the development of a TMDL for dissolved oxygen in the San Joaquin River. The City of Stockton is taking a prominent role with the Committee in the development of such a TMDL. The TMDL Steering Committee process involves cities, wastewater dischargers, federal and state regulatory and resource agencies, interested parties and stakeholders on the San Joaquin River. The goals of the TMDL study include determining the sources of oxygen demanding discharges to the river, defining the causes of low dissolved oxygen, and apportioning responsibility for correcting the problems which have been identified. The TMDL is expected to take three years to complete. The City of Stockton acknowledges and appreciates the assistance of CALFED in approving a grant to the TMDL Steering Committee for the purpose of researching the causes of the low dissolved oxygen episodes and devising solutions for the various issues involved. The City also applauds the active participation of CALFED staff in the TMDL Steering Committee and other TMDL committees.

The Head of Old River Barrier can assist in meeting the DO standards by helping to keep a positive downstream flow in the San Joaquin River past Stockton and adaptively managing flows to maximize benefits for all beneficial uses. As noted above, the City would like to be a

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member of the committee that makes decisions regarding Head of Old River Barrier operations. All stakeholders should participate in these decisions.

Because the DO objective was established for the protection of fish, particularly fall-run chinook salmon, and because an adequate flow in the San Joaquin River is one of the elements necessary to meet DO requirements, CALFED should assure funding for purchases of water necessary to meet the DO objectives, similar to the purchases of water for meeting the spring pulse flow at Vernalis. Such purchases could be made using CVPIA restoration funds or CALFED funds, and should be part of the CALFED Program.

With reference to paragraph 2.4.1 of the *Water Quality Program Plan* document, the City of Stockton would like to remind CALFED staff that Stockton has been working for more than 25 years to reduce Regional Wastewater Control Facility (RWCF) contributions to low DO episodes, including the construction of the only tertiary wastewater treatment plant in the San Joaquin valley, and is taking a prominent role in the development of a dissolved oxygen TMDL for the San Joaquin River, which includes committing over half a million dollars to assist in TMDL development. Stockton has also invested considerable money to reduce the BOD and algae loads from the RWCF. The high cost of further treatment is, in our opinion, disproportional to the potential benefits. DO is a watershed issue. Flow management, control of upstream BOD and nutrient loads, or instream aeration techniques (i.e., Corps of Engineers jet aeration or side-stream waterfalls) may prove more effective in improving DO than ammonia removal from wastewater discharges.

The summary of the "low DO issue" on page 2-3 and 2-4 is simplified and somewhat misleading. DO concentrations near Stockton are generally above the DO objective of 5 mg/l, although periodic episodes of lower DO are routinely measured. A more thorough discussion of our current scientific understanding of this phenomenon (conceptual model) and the relative

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effects of various controllable factors (water quality model simulations) was presented in testimony last summer before the State Water Resources Control Board (i.e. "Potential Solutions for achieving the San Joaquin River DO Objectives"). This report is being used as the initial guide for the TMDL Steering and Technical committees. Additional data is being collected and analyses are being made to more accurately evaluate the processes which lead to these low DO excursions, and to develop a plan of implementation of the TMDL.

WATER SUPPLIES FOR EASTERN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

The eastern San Joaquin County groundwater basin has been classified by the Department of Water Resources in *Bulletin 118* as "in a critical condition of overdraft." Moreover, the basin is subject to saltwater intrusion from ancient waters underlying the Delta. Groundwater has traditionally provided most of the water supply for municipal and industrial uses and for agriculture. In 1985, in their *Eastern San Joaquin County Groundwater Report*, Brown and Caldwell estimated the annual basin overdraft at 250,000 acre feet. Without supplemental surface water to replace groundwater use, portions of the groundwater basin will soon become unusable, which will produce serious and substantial harm to the local economy.

The City of Stockton strongly supports the construction of groundwater banking facilities in the Eastern San Joaquin and Delta-Central Sierra groundwater basins represented by the projects listed on Page 89 of the Phase II Report. CALFED must recognize and effectively deal with the water supply problems and groundwater overdraft in Eastern San Joaquin County if they are to address Delta water quality issues.

CALFED's list of potential surface storage sites does not include any site in San Joaquin County. The City of Stockton would point out to CALFED that a number of very attractive sites exist in San Joaquin County which could be used in a conjunctive manner with groundwater storage for north of the Delta storage. These sites include Middle Bar and Duck

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Creek (offstream) on the Mokelumne; South Gulch (offstream) on the Calaveras; and Littlejohns Creek (offstream) on the Stanislaus. It is requested that the Phase II Report list these as potential storage sites under the CALFED program.

In Chapter 5 of the Main Volume of the DEIR, page 5.1-64, it is stated that in the evaluation of storage, new San Joaquin River Region storage facilities were dedicated to providing water for Ecosystem Restoration Program flow targets. CALFED must also consider the municipal water supply needs of the region. Eastern San Joaquin County has very few water supply options. New storage in this region must include municipal water supply goals. Overall, the proposed CALFED alternative is far more specific as to ecosystem restoration measures than about how municipal water supply needs will be met. The human population is a part of the ecosystem as well.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (REFERENCES TO REVISED PHASE II REPORT)

Section 3.6.2 Water Use Efficiency. CALFED should refer the question of the use of recycled reclaimed wastewater to the Agricultural Water Management Council for study and the development of a policy statement. There is considerable resistance from the Agricultural Community to the use of recycled reclaimed wastewater even though the requirements of Title 22 are met. The Agricultural Water Management Council should develop assurances satisfactory to the Agricultural community that will allow the recycling objectives to be realized.

The City strongly supports the water conservation actions and goals set forth in the Revised Phase II Report.

The City of Stockton reserves judgment on the necessity to include an isolated facility in the Phase II Report, since this is not one of the Preferred Alternatives. If at some future date, it

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appears likely that an isolated facility will be considered, the City of Stockton will provide detailed comments that address that alternative.

CALFED must assure that, before Joint Point of Diversion and use of full SWP capacity of 10,300 cfs are implemented, the effects of such actions on San Joaquin River water quality, dissolved oxygen in the vicinity of Stockton, and water levels in the channels in the South Delta are thoroughly evaluated.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.